

What is claimed:

1. A method for automatically storing and restoring the state of an application and/or electronic document according to a context change in said application program or electronic document, comprising:

determining a previous context for said application program and/or electronic document;

collecting a current state of said application and/or electronic document;

associating said current state with said previous context and storing said current state;

determining a new context for said application program and/or electronic document;

recalling the previously stored state for said new context; and

restoring said previously stored state to said application and/or electronic document.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said current and previously stored states of said application and/or electronic document include but are not limited to the state of a plurality of user interface elements, including but not limited to windows, buttons, menu items, text boxes, toolbars, palettes, icons, scrollbars and sliders.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said state includes but is not limited to screen location of said user interface elements, size of said user interface elements, layout of said user interface elements, and any state specific to a certain type of said user interface elements.

4. The method of claim 2, and further comprising choosing which user elements should have said state persisted.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said previous and current contexts are determined by the content types being edited, where said content types include but are not limited to text, raster images, vector graphics, audio content, video content, or proprietary content.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein said previous and current contexts are determined by changes to the user interface, including but not limited to selecting a user interface tool or changing a view of a document.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the user is presented an interface for defining said current and previous states.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein said interface comprises a dialog box listing all possible settings which can comprise said current and previous states.
9. The method of claim 7, wherein said interface comprises context sensitive menus listing all possible settings which can comprise said current and previous states.
10. A method for automatically customizing a user interface in an application program according to changes in contexts of said application program or of an electronic document being modified by said application program, comprising:
  - determining a previous context for said application program and/or electronic document;
  - collecting a current user interface state of said application and/or electronic document;
  - associating said current state with said previous context and storing said current state;
  - determining a new context for said application program and/or electronic document;
  - recalling the previously stored user interface state for said new context; and

based upon said previously stored user interface state, invoking, resizing, resetting, moving and/or dismissing pre-existing windows, buttons, menus, text boxes, toolbars, palettes, icons, scrollbars and/or sliders.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein users are presented with an interface allowing them to choose which of said contexts are enabled or disabled

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said interface consists of a dialog box listing all contexts in an application.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein, by way of example only and not by way of limitation, said contexts might be defined by what type of content is being edited, what kind of user interface element is selected, what type of network is being connected to, or what kind of window is open.

14. A machine readable medium having a set of machine readable instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for automatically storing and restoring the state of an application and/or electronic document according to a context change in said application program or electronic document, the method comprising:

determining a previous context for said application program and/or electronic document;

collecting a current state of said application and/or electronic document;

associating said current state with said previous context and storing said current state;

determining a new context for said application program and/or electronic document;

recalling the previously stored state for said new context; and

restoring said previously stored state to said application and/or electronic document.